

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-12 (Previously Cancelled)

Claim 13. (Currently amended) A method for removing hydrogen sulfide gas from a stream of natural gas, comprising the following steps:

(a) providing a column having an inlet at the base of said column and an outlet at the upper end of said column,

(b) charging said column with a scavenging agent including a group IIA metal hydroxide,

~~(b)~~ (c) introducing hydrogen sulfide laden natural gas into said inlet,

~~(e)~~ (d) receiving natural gas from said outlet having a lower concentration of hydrogen sulfide than the natural gas entering said inlet,

(e) sampling the natural gas leaving said column to determine the concentration of hydrogen sulfide, and,

(f) removing used scavenging agent from said column and replacing said used scavenging agent with fresh scavenging agent if the concentration of hydrogen of sulfide gas in said natural gas leaving said column is above a predetermined level and continuing such replacement of used scavenging agent with fresh scavenging agent until the

concentration of hydrogen sulfide in said natural gas leaving said column falls below a predetermined level.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein:

said group IIA metal hydroxide is calcium hydroxide.

15. (Cancel)

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a fresh scavenging agent supply source in communication with said column via a first controllable conduit,

(b) providing a used scavenging agent collection vessel in communication with said column via a second controllable conduit,

(c) providing a hydrogen sulfide detector for sensing the concentration of hydrogen sulfide in the natural gas leaving said column,

(d) providing a control device in communication with said hydrogen sulfide detector, and,

(e) operatively associating said control device with said first and second controllable conduits such that fresh scavenging agent is added to said column and used scavenging agent is removed from said column when said hydrogen sulfide detector detects a concentration of hydrogen sulfide above a predetermined level and such that the addition of fresh scavenging agent and the removal of used scavenging agent ceases when

said hydrogen sulfide detector detects a concentration of hydrogen sulfide below a predetermined level.